Part I: Attachments
OMB Control Number: 1820-0664
Expiration Date: 10-31-2008

Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency: NC Department of Health and Human Services

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency:
    Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, NC Assistive Technology Program

Address of Lead Agency: 1110 Navaho Drive, Suite 101
                              Raleigh, NC 27609

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency:
        Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary
        Department of Health and Human Services

Address for Certifying Representative: 101 Blair Drive
                                                Raleigh, NC 27626

Telephone for Certifying Representative: (919) 733-4534

E-mail for Certifying Representative: Carmen.HookerOdom@ncmail.net

Name and Title of Program Director: Ricki Hiatt, Program Director
                                            NC Assistive Technology Program

Address for Program Director: 1110 Navaho Drive, Suite 101
                                            Raleigh, NC   27609

Telephone for Program Director: (919) 850-2787

E-mail for Program Director: rhiatt@ncatp.org

Name and Title of Program Contact (if different from Program Director): N/A

Address for Program Director:

Telephone for Program Director:

E-mail for Program Director:

Name of Implementing Entity: N/A

 North Carolina

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Entity:

Address of Implementing Entity:

Name and Title of Program Director:

Address for Program Director:

Telephone for Program Director:

E-mail for Program Director:

Name and Title of Program Contact (if different from Program Director):

Address for Program Director:

Telephone for Program Director:

E-mail for Program Director:

North Carolina

Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity

2.1 <u>Identification and Description of the Lead Agency</u> - Identify and describe the Lead Agency referred to in section 4(c)(1)(A) of the AT Act.

2.1A <u>Identification and Description of Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is not Designated</u>

The lead agency for the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The NC governor designated the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) be the applicant and resulting grantee for the State Program under the Assistive Technology Act funding. DVRS is under the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS policy states that DHHS is always listed as the recipient of any grant for any division within the department on such documents as the award notice. DVRS is a part of DHHS and therefore no contract or administrative agreement is necessary. NCATP is administered through DVRS and no contract or administrative agreement is necessary. NCATP is a section within the organizational structure of DVRS. For 15 years, DVRS has been the designated lead agency for the comprehensive statewide assistive technology program in North Carolina. NCATP is the section within DVRS that provides the assistive technology services as required under the Assistive Technology Act. NCATP serves all ages, all disabilities and across all aspects of life including assistive technology use at home, school, work, in leisure and recreation, community living and for independent living. NCATP is administratively housed under Vocational Rehabilitation, but is in no way limited in meeting the AT Act purpose and goals of serving people with all disabilities across the human lifespan. From the outset, 15 years ago, the DVRS Director made a commitment to meeting the full intent of the AT Act to enable NCATP to serve people of all ages, all disabilities, and across all aspects of life. Therefore NCATP will operate under the authority of the requirements within the Assistive Technology Act, <u>not</u> the Vocational Rehabilitation Act or the Workforce Investment Act. DVRS policies for vocational rehabilitation eligibility and services are <u>not</u> applied to NCATP service delivery in any manner.

NCATP has extensive expertise in assistive technology. The program's purpose is to increase access of assistive technology to people of all ages and abilities. NCATP has 15 years experience in providing technical assistive technology consultative services for people with disabilities and will continue to do so.   NCATP services include device demonstration, device loan, technology exchange post, training and technical assistance, public awareness and coordination and collaboration. Services will continue to be available statewide through assistive technology centers staffed by Assistive Technology Consultants and Specialists.

NCATP Assistive Technology Consultants and Assistive Technology Specialists are highly qualified professionals with technical expertise in the field of Assistive Technology. Staff education and experience are in the fields of speech language pathology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation engineering, computer technology,

therapeutic recreation and education. NCATP has a vast amount of expertise and experience, with a collective 239 years of assistive technology and disability-related experience by 16 staff.   Minimum job requirements for AT Specialists and AT Consultants are 4 to 8 years of experience, respectively in working with people with disabilities. Currently five (5) staff hold AT Practitioner certification through RESNA. NCATP services offered focus on assistive technology technical expertise.   NCATP provides these services to individuals with disabilities, their family members, guardians, advocates, as well as other professionals and agencies and organizations who serve the individual with a disability.

The lead agency promotes NCATP's ability to coordinate, and collaborate with other public and private entities in the field of assistive technology and those who serve individuals with disabilities and their families, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives throughout the State. DVRS and NCATP has existing relationships with key entities including: Department of Public Instruction, Division of Services for the Blind, Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Workforce Development Commission, Division of Aging, Governor's Advocacy Council for Person's with Disabilities (P&A), Division of Public Health/AT Infant & Toddler Program, Partnerships in Assistive Technology (private nonprofit), Council on Developmental Disabilities, Division of Mental Health, Development Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, Centers for Independent Living, Autism Society, MS Society, AgrAbility, Easter Seals United Cerebral Palsy of NC, NC Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, allied health at each State Universities, community colleges, the Center for Universal Design, AAC-RERC at Duke University.

The lead agency has a consumer- responsive approach to developing, planning and implementing assistive technology activities and services. DVRS and NCATP have policy in place that ensures informed choice is a central component in the service delivery process. NCATP uses a consumer centered approach in all services. For example, NCATP staff demonstrates a wide range of devices to consumers showing them options available from low tech to high tech and low cost to high cost items. This approach allows consumers to learn about, touch and try-out a variety of devices so they can determine what suits them best. Consumers can borrow devices to try them out at home, work, school or other community setting. Each year, NCATP purchases new devices for the centers based on consumer demand and items most requested for short term loan. Satisfaction surveys are sent out quarterly to gain feedback from consumers and family members regarding timely and appropriate delivery of services. DVRS and NCATP provide materials in accessible formats to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to information. Formats may include Braille, large print, disc/CD, or advance email of materials prior to meetings. DVRS and NCATP policy requires that websites meet accessibility guidelines as well. The lead agency requires that meeting and training locations must be accessible for DVRS and NCATP sponsored events. DVRS holds public hearings each year to gain consumer input into identifying needs, planning and better implementation of services. People with disabilities and their families represent 64% of the membership of the NCATP Advisory Council. The

Advisory Council meets at least three (3) times a year and routinely provides input into the activities of the NCATP.

2.1B <u>Identification and Description of the Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is Designated</u>

Not applicable

2.2 <u>Identification and Description of the Implementing Entity</u> – Identify and describe the Implementing Entity referred to in section 4(c)(1)(B) of the AT Act, if such an Implementing Entity is designated by the Governor.

Not applicable

2.3 <u>Show of Good Cause for Change in Lead Agency or Implementing Entity</u> – If the Governor has chosen to change the Lead Agency or, if applicable, Implementing Entity as allowed in section 4(c)(1)(C) of the AT Act, provide an explanation of good cause for this redesignation.

Not applicable

Attachment 3: State Advisory Council

3.1 <u>Membership of the Advisory Council</u> - Identify the members of the Advisory Council and each member's designation as an individual with disabilities who uses AT, a family member or guardian of such individual, or a representative of a State agency or other entity.

The Grant Advisory Council (GAC) of North Carolina is established to provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to State planning of, implementation of, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the federal grant to the NC Assistive Technology Program. The NC GAC has thirteen (13) members. The council is geographically representative of North Carolina and reflects the diversity of NC with respect to race, ethnicity, type of disability across the age span, and users of types of services that an individual with a disability may receive. Sixty-two (62) % of the members of the council are individuals with disabilities that use assistive technology or represent family members with a disability. Five (5) members of the Council represent agencies including the Division of the Services for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation, Center for Independent Living, Department of Public Instruction and the State Workforce Investment Board. Representatives from state agencies are not counted in meeting the requirements for majority membership by people with disabilities and family members although several agency representatives do have a disability.

<u>Members of the Advisory Council:</u>
Individuals with Disabilities: Randy Bachlott, Greg Best, Ruth Haines, June Moss
Family Members: Matty Lazo-Chadderton, Evelyn Lucas, Sandy McMillan, Suzanne Meek.
Represent State Agencies: Rene Cummins, Center for Independent Living; Paula Kuhn, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Mary Flanagan, Division of Services for the Blind; Tamme Reese, Workforce Investment; Tom Winton, Division of Public Instruction.

3.2 <u>Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council</u> – Describe the structure and operations of the Advisory Council.

The GAC will meet three (3) times per year in person at centrally located meeting sites. The council will be led by a chairperson that is elected by the members of the council. A vice-chair will also be elected by membership and serve in the absence of the chairperson. Minutes will be recorded by staff. The meeting agenda, preview materials and previous meeting minutes will be sent to each member prior to the meeting. The members of the advisory council will not receive compensation for their service on the council, but will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses actually incurred in the performance of official duties for the advisory council.

Council members will provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the State for planning and implementation of the activities carried out through the federal grant. The GAC will provide input for program evaluation and setting the measurable goals as

described in the AT Act of 2004. At the chairperson's discretion, council decisions will be made either through consensus or by member vote. At each meeting, NCATP staff will update the council on program activities and solicit input from the members. The chairperson will lead the membership throughout to gain input and provide advice in planning most appropriate AT activities in the State. The chairperson and the NCATP Director will set the meeting agenda topics to ensure that council members are educated about State AT issues. Presentations and speakers will be selected based on council members input and staff will develop materials for member packets. NCATP staff will make the meeting room arrangements, ensuring site and material accessibility. Council members representing state agencies were appointed by the directors of each agency. Members with disabilities and family member's names were solicited from consumer, parent and advocacy organizations.

Attachment 4: Measurable Goals

NCATP will establish a baseline for each of the goals 4.1 through 4.7 during Year Two of the State Plan and will submit after Year Two an amendment identifying the long term goal and short-term goals set to improve upon this baseline during Year Three and subsequent years of the State Plan. This baseline will be established by using a data collection instrument and procedures to be determined by RSA.

4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
    - Short-term goal for Year 3:
    - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
    - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.2 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
    - Short-term goal for Year 3:
    - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for employment purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
    - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.3 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
    - Short-term goal for Year 3:
    - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
    - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

- Long-term goal:
    - Short-term goal for Year 3:

- Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for IT/Telecommunication purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
- Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.5 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State Financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would have not obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.6 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State Financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would have not obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.7 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate and targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State Financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would have not obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.8 Additional Measurable Goals -- If applicable, describe any measurable goals that the State has set in addition to the goals established in items 4.1 through 4.7 for addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in the State related to education, employment, community living, and telecommunications and information technology.

Not applicable

North Carolina

Attachment 5: State-level Activities

5.1 <u>State Financing Activities</u> – Describe how the State will implement State financing activities as described in section 4(e)(2)(A) of the AT Act.

The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program is invoking State Flexibility and will not be providing state financing activities. See Attachment 7 for more specific information.

5.2 <u>Device Reutilization Program</u> – Describe how the State will implement a device reutilization program as described in section 4(e)(2)(B) of the Act.

NCATP will continue to offer device reutilization through the Technology Exchange Post, a service which has been available to consumers and their families statewide for over 10 years. The NC Technology Exchange Post will be expanded to provide a new, improved searchable website. This will be implemented October 1, 2006. In this new system, consumers and family members who are potential "sellers" of used assistive technology can list their items for sell on a designated website available to the general public. In turn, potential "buyers" of used assistive technology can search the new website for products they are interested in buying. The new system will also allow for more complete collection of user data to enable NCATP to meet the federal reporting requirements. The Technology Exchange Post is a used equipment database to assist people with disabilities in obtaining used equipment at lower cost. This service will help more people get assistive technology devices. It will help those who might not be able to afford to buy them new or people who trying to keep their costs down. The Exchange Post is similar to a "want ad" in that individuals list items they wish to sell. Only people with disabilities or their family members can list items for sale. They must be North Carolina residents. No vendors or businesses can post items for sale. People who are interested in buying used equipment can check the listing regularly to find items they wish to buy. The listing of used equipment will be maintained and updated constantly as sellers can enter new items at any time. It can be accessed on the web at <u>www.pat.org</u>. If preferred, people can request it be U.S. mailed directly to them each month. It will also be distributed statewide to organizations who serve people with disabilities as well as through various local, state, or regional conferences, workshops, meetings and fairs/exhibits. Buyers can be anyone who wishes to purchase the item. The seller and buyer interact directly with each other. A wide range of used assistive technology devices will be listed in the categories per the designated, approved federal taxonomy.

The Technology Exchange Post is a subcontract and complies with the competitive bid State contract policy and process. The Technology Exchange Post subcontractor will continue to be responsible for coordination, management and maintenance of the listing. The subcontractor will review each posting and ensure proper entries and compliance with program policy, enter the items on the website for people who do not have Internet access, print hard copies for monthly mailing or hand-out, mail hard copies to requesting parties, and do a Spanish translation, conduct follow-up with sellers and buyer and enter data into the system to meet the federal reporting requirements. The subcontractor will

maintain an email list and a U.S. mailing list, a website, and conduct outreach and publicity as well as collect statistical data, report stats to NCATP and manage the subcontract budget. Outreach will include people with any type of disability, all ages, across income levels and throughout all 100 counties in North Carolina. Technology Exchange Post customers are people with disabilities, their family members, guardians or other representatives.

5.3 Device Loan Program – Describe how the State will implement a device loan program as described in section 4(e)(2)(C) of the Act.

The device loan program is currently available statewide and will continue to be provided directly by NCATP staff through NCATP Assistive Technology Centers and satellite locations across the state. To find the nearest AT Center location, go to the NCATP website www.ncatp.org   Consumers, family members, professionals, employers and the general public can use the device loan program simply by contacting staff at any of the NCATP locations. A wide range of assistive technology devices will be available including augmentative communication, computer access, low-vision aids, assistive listening, aids for daily living, switches, environmental controls, adaptive toys and recreational devices. Services can be borrowed for a two week period. If no one else is waiting for the borrowed device, then the loan time can be extended. Borrowers will be responsible for pick up and return of the device(s). The device loan program will help individuals try out equipment in the location they will use them: at home, work, school or recreational activities. It's a "try before you buy" approach which will help individuals and funding agencies make wiser choices. Consumers can determine which device(s) best meet their needs. The devices loans will be tracked and reminder notices generated to keep equipment available to as many people as possible. The tracking system will also help identify which devices are the most popular for loan. This information will help NCATP make purchasing decisions of which items to add to the loan program each year.

This program will also help: 1) public schools comply with IDEA requirements which increases device access to students with disabilities; 2) employers' compliance with ADA requirements thus improving job opportunities for people with disabilities; 3) improve compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act improving accessibility. NCATP will continue to collaborate with other public and private entities to provide closer access in rural areas to device loan services. NCATP will place devices at various locations for device loan in addition to the NCATP AT Centers. Collaborating entities will provide in-kind office space, staff time, and data collection. Collaborating organizations include: Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Resource Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, community colleges, private physical rehabilitation centers and Easter Seals UCP.

5.4 Device Demonstration Program – Describe how the State will implement a device demonstration program as described in section 4(e)(2)(D) of the Act.

The device demonstration program will continue to be run directly by NCATP staff through the NCATP Assistive Technology Centers and satellite locations across the state. To find the nearest AT Center location, go to the NCATP website www.ncatp.org   A wide range of assistive technology devices will be available for demonstration including augmentative communication, computer access, low-vision aids, assistive listening, aids for daily living, switches, environmental controls, adaptive toys and recreational devices. This service will be offered to individuals with disabilities and their families as well as the professionals and programs who serve the individuals. Device demonstration will be provided either on-site in an AT Center or NCATP staff can go off-site in the individual's home, school, worksite or other community location upon request. The first preference is to come to the AT Center because more devices are available there. Often the individual brings up new needs once they see the wide range of assistive technology. To access this service, simply contact the closest NCATP center to set up an appointment. Intake information helps NCATP staff prepare for the device demonstration and consultation. If an agency or organization is requesting this service on behalf of an individual, they should submit background information prior to the device demonstration.

Various devices are demonstrated; basic information on the features is given; and then the consumer gets a chance to try it out. This is a hands-on approach for demonstrating devices. NCATP services will be centered around the consumers, their needs and giving them more choices for greater independence. Consumers will identify their needs and NCATP staff will demonstrate the various devices with features and functions that can help meet those needs. Information will be provided about State and local vendors, providers and repair services. Individuals will also be able to borrow devices for try out for a two week period through the device loan program The device demonstration experience will help individuals with disabilities select the device(s) that would work best for them. Purchasers of devices, whether they are consumers, families, agencies or other funding sources, will obtain critical information to make wiser purchases. Device demonstrations can be simple or complex. It may simply involve showing the person how a device works and letting them try it out.

Consumers or family members are not charged for services, but organizations may be charged. Typically agencies, school systems or other organizations require formal written evaluations/assessments to determine whether to provide specific services (such as purchase of equipment). In accordance with federal law, agencies must pay for these services.

Through the NCATP staff's technical expertise a range of evaluation, assessment, training and consultation services will be available on a fee basis to referring agencies, schools and other programs. The Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as amended (P.L. 108-364) stipulates that State AT Projects cannot supplant (replace) the responsibilities of other programs such as special education, vocational rehabilitation, independent living, veterans administration, etc. The North Carolina State Legislative Rules committee approved establishment of the fee-for-service charges in NC administrative code, Title 10, Chapter 20, subchapter 20C, section .0125 "Rates and fees for purchasers of

services". A written authorization, purchase order or letter authorizing payment will be necessary prior to scheduling an appointment for these services.

Fee-Based Services in the area of device demonstration are:

> Assistive Technology Assessment provides an in-depth analysis of devices to assist a person with a disability in achieving an identified task or goal. This assessment is conducted on-site in an Assistive Technology Center in collaboration with the consumer, family and related service professionals. A hands-on approach allows consumers to try out a variety of devices both low tech and high tech. The individual may borrow devices on short term loan to try out at school, work, home or another setting at no additional charge. A comprehensive written report is provided. Recommendations are given for assistive technology devices and related services with equipment specifications and information to help funding sources in their purchase process.

> Community Based Assessment is provided in settings other than an Assistive Technology Center. Settings may include: work, home, school, group home or other community site. This assessment can be part of a multi-disciplinary approach in which devices are tailored to meet the needs of a specific setting, task, or situation. A comprehensive written report is provided to the party requesting the assessment.

> Feature Matching & Device Trial service helps match the best AT device to a person's ability.   NC Assistive Technology Program staff will work with the referral professionals to determine which devices to try based on a brief in-house assessment with the input of other referral information. A one-page summary of feature matching and summary of devices that meet the individual's requirements is provided to the referral source.

The intensive hands-on approach with the individual and the equipment will mean better device identification before purchase decisions are made by funding sources. It will help people make more informed choices as they see and learn about device options. Obviously, this can be a cost effective measure to agencies, schools and other organizations.

Demonstration of devices will continue to be provided by highly qualified NCATP staff. NCATP Assistive Technology Consultants and Assistive Technology Specialists have technical expertise in the field of Assistive Technology. Staff education and experience are in the fields of speech language pathology, occupational therapy, rehabilitation engineering, computer technology, therapeutic recreation and education. NCATP has a vast amount of expertise and experience, with a collective 239 years of assistive technology and disability-related experience by 16 staff.   Minimum job requirements for AT Specialists and AT Consultants are 4 to 8 years of experience, respectively in working with people with disabilities. Currently five (5) staff hold AT Practitioner certification through RESNA. The device demonstration services are currently available

statewide. NCATP collaborates with other public and private entities to provide device demonstration services. Collaborating entities providing in-kind space for demonstration of devices include: Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, Regional Resource Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, community colleges, private physical rehabilitation centers and Easter Seal UCP. This helps NCATP reach more people, closer to their home area.

Attachment 6: Comparable Support

Not applicable

6.1 <u>Source and Amount of Support</u> – Identify the State-level activity for which there is comparable support, the source of this support, the amount of the support, and the project year for which this support is being provided.

6.2 <u>Comparability</u> -- Demonstrate that this support is comparable in terms of funding and that the activities are comparable in terms of scope.

6.3 <u>Coordination and Collaboration</u> – Describe how the State will coordinate activities and collaborate with the appropriate entity, if the comparable funds are provided to, or the activities are conducted by, an entity other than the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity.

Attachment 7: State Flexibility

7.1 <u>Activity</u> – Identify each State-level activity the State is choosing not to carry out.

The NC Assistive Technology Program is choosing not to carry out an alternative financing program as its state financing activity because of a historical lack of consumer demand for this service. North Carolina had a statewide adaptive equipment financial loan program provided by Bank of America and Programs for Accessible Living for eight years (1994- 2002). Vehicles, CCTVs, specialized computers, and hearing aids were the most common requests. NCATP provided technical assistance to Programs for Accessible Living to establish the loan program and referred people inquiring about funding resources for the purchase of assistive technology devices. Bank of America stopped the program in 2002 after the demand for the program decreased dramatically – two (2) loans in 2001 and three (3) loans in 2002.   Only 136 loans (totaling $546,245.86) were provided during the eight (8) years of the program. Many people needing AT had a high debt to income ratio so they did not qualify financially for the loan program. There is no indication that this condition has changed. Therefore, resources will be better spent supporting the device reutilization program, the Technology Exchange Post (previously described in section 5.2) and activities noted in 7.2 and 7.3 to increase acquisition of AT.

7.2 <u>Maintenance of Statewideness and Comprehensiveness</u> – Demonstrate that the Statewide AT Program will continue to be comprehensive without conducting this activity.

Despite the lack of a dedicated AFP in NC, the NC citizens still can access loans for certain types of AT through a national program. Bank of America now has a national loan program called Access Loans.   People with disabilities can apply for a loan for vehicle modifications or home modifications. While loans for only homes and vehicles is not as comprehensive as loans for any kind of AT, some of the most common loans given out under the previous program were for vehicle modifications so much of the demand can still be met through the national program. The Access Loan website is: http://www.bankofamerica.com/loansandhomes/index.cfm?template=lc_ml_access_loans

NCATP will refer people to the Bank of America Access Loan Program and explain how the loan program works. The Bank of America Access Loans for Vehicles provides loans for the purchase of new or used cars, vans or light-duty trucks and necessary adaptive equipment. A longer repayment period lowers monthly payments. New vehicles may be financed up to 100% of the purchase price of the vehicle (includes adaptive equipment) plus options, tax, license, documentation fee and service warranty. Used vehicles may be financed up to 100% of the purchase price plus adaptive equipment, tax, license, documentation fee, and service warranty.

The Home Improvement Loans provide financing for certain home modification projects such as building access ramps, installing lifts, widening doors or lowering cabinets to increase accessibility. The loan provides a choice of Second Mortgage or Home Equity

Loans. The maximum loan amount is 100% of a home's appraised value. Longer repayment periods lower monthly payments and fixed-interest rates establish stable monthly payments.

7.3 Achievement of Measurable Goals - Demonstrate that the State can reach its measurable education goals, employment goals, telecommunications and information technology goals, and community living goals without conducting such activities.

NCATP will provide other services that can help people obtain equipment. The Technology Exchange Post (previously described in section 5.2) will help people purchase used equipment at lower cost. Also the sale of items that are no longer in use can generate funds for the purchase of other devices. NCATP staff will provide funding information to individuals with disabilities. The NCATP Funding Specialist and the Consumer Resource Specialist will help people by phone or in person to understand where they can go for funding of equipment. They will explain eligibility requirements, strategies to use in obtaining funding from the various sources, contact information as well as appeals process information if the individual is denied funding from state or federally funded programs.

A list of private foundations and non-profit organizations that provide funding to individuals will be developed. The list will contain contact information, specific details on the types of funding available and directions on how to apply for funds from each organization. NCATP will work with the Christina Foundation to provide computers to individuals with disabilities in North Carolina. NCATP staff will continue to work with members of the NC Assistive Technology Consortium and other agencies to identify funding resources and to share information with individuals and disability grassroots organizations.

7.4 Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity will coordinate activities and collaborate with entities in the State that do conduct this activity, if the State chooses not to conduct this activity because another entity already conducts it.

There are no other organizations in NC conducting state financing activities similar to those required under the AT Act.

Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities

8.1 <u>Training and Technical Assistance Activities</u> – Describe how the State will provide training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals from local settings statewide, including representatives of State and local educational agencies, other State and local agencies, early intervention programs, adult service programs, hospitals and other health care facilities, institutions of higher education and businesses as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(i) of the AT Act.

The NC Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) will continue to provide training and technical assistance to enhance the assistive technology (AT) knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals. People with any type of disability and people of all ages can use these services through NCATP. Parents and other family members can also participate in training and technical assistance. Technical assistance will be offered one-on-one to individuals or to groups or organizations. Training is usually a group activity. Many different professionals and programs will be able to use these services: school systems, early intervention programs, adult service programs, allied health, hospitals, community colleges, universities, employers, and job link centers. AT consultants and specialists will conduct training, develop and disseminate training materials, and provide technical assistance related to assistive technology.   NCATP staff will respond to individual requests about the benefits of AT, device options, information on funding resources, and the use of specific devices. Staff will research the inquiry and provide the information in person either on-site or in the home, school, work or community setting or via phone, email or U.S. mail. Consumers or family members will not be charged for troubleshooting or initial training on a device.

Organizations requesting training and technical assistance will be charged a fee. Training and Technical Assistance fee based services include:

> Training on Specific Devices/Software includes training on use of assistive technology devices, equipment or software packages. This training can be provided to individuals or groups. Potential participants: consumers, family members, professionals, organizations, businesses, school systems, government agencies, etc. Examples of frequently requested training: Speaking Dynamically Pro, Intellitools, Dragon Naturally Speaking.

> Consultation Services provide assistive technology expertise by NCATP staff to individuals or organizations for a specific need identified by the requesting party. Written reports are not provided for consultations unless the requesting party pays for the report writing time.

> Workshops/Seminars are specialized presentations, seminars or workshops regarding assistive technology conducted to meet an organization's needs.

Organizations often request technical assistance from NCATP to help them in providing better services to the people they serve.   For example, a school system may have equipment on hand for students with special needs, but the teachers don't know how to use the devices. They may request that NCATP come to their school to assess the equipment, check to see if it is working correctly, identify necessary repairs or ancillary devices for operation, set up the equipment and show school staff how to use it. NCATP staff will explain the functions of the AT and ways it can benefit individuals with different abilities.

Training will continue to be provided at local, regional and statewide levels based upon demand. NCATP will provide training ranging from an overview of AT to specific AT skills development training.   Regionally, NCATP will work with schools, community colleges and universities, Job Link sites and state agencies to provide training. Topics may include: computer access, environmental controls, augmentative communication, AT related to hearing loss, low vision aids, and low-tech AT for activities of daily living, and funding resource information.

On a statewide level, NCATP will continue to co-sponsor the annual NC Assistive Technology Expo. This two-day conference will offer a wide array of concurrent AT training sessions for people with disabilities of all ages, their families and professionals. Tracks will cover AT for young children, schools, adults and older adults, work, and leisure. Sessions will offer a concentrated focus for skill development on specific areas of AT. A vendor exhibit hall, with about 40 vendors will be open to the public at no charge on the first day of the AT Expo. Attendees will receive in-depth training on AT and see state of the art AT in the exhibit hall. Registration fees will be kept low and affordable. Scholarships to assist with participant cost will be available to people with disabilities and families. The AT Expo continues to grow in attendance each year.   A special group rate will continue to be offered to community colleges and universities so they can sponsor their allied health students to attend.   This promotes the next generation of professionals to achieve a higher level of AT knowledge.   Also, college and university engineering, occupational therapy and speech language pathology students present poster sessions on their innovative assistive technology projects. The AT Expo is an annual event and, as such, will be an excellent vehicle to address current and future AT training needs. The program is designed each year to address timely topics on AT across ages and disabilities. Planning is a ten month effort with sponsorship by public and private agencies. Topics will be identified based on suggestions from conference evaluations and input from the Advisory Council, and the AT Expo Planning and Program Committees. NCATP also will provide training at other conferences such as Developmental Disabilities Best Practices, NC Exceptional Children's Conference, NC Rehab Association and conferences on Aging.

NCATP will continue to give assistance during times of "transition" or movement from one phase of life to another. This will involve high school students as well as young children and adults. For the high school student, transition refers to a process that promotes movement from school to post school activities. NCATP will address transition issues through the technical assistance provided students with disabilities,

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parents, local schools as well as regional and state agencies. Services will be provided to identify AT options for further education, work, community living or other services. NCATP staff will address AT needs essential to consumers successful movement from one service area into another. Students with disabilities and their parents or guardians will receive one-on-one technical consultation regarding devices and related services that will help them in transition. NCATP staff will work with the family and the school in the IEP and ITP process and the selection of appropriate AT to help the student with schoolwork.   Technical consultation with the student, parent, teacher and related services professionals will be a team approach. AT Consultants and Specialists will provide technical assistance to the school systems, vocational rehabilitation, and independent living for more effective consumers transition planning.

In addition to transition services for older students, NCATP will help young children in their transition into services for older children. NCATP will operate three (3) AT Resource Centers (ATRC) for children birth – 5 years of age through funding from the Division of Public Health. These ATRC locations will offer technical expertise in early intervention AT services. A more extensive array and larger number of devices will be available for demonstration and loan including adaptive toys, augmentative communication, seating and positioning, and other specialized AT for young children. A longer equipment loan period will be provided so the children will have more time with age appropriate devices or toys. NCATP will continue collaboration with four other ATRC's managed by other agencies. Staff from NCATP will train other early intervention professionals about AT devices and help rural areas develop better evaluation services. NCATP will help develop local augmentative communication teams for infants and toddlers.

For adults or older adults maintaining or transitioning to community living, NCATP will continue to provide AT services beginning where the person is now. For example, NCATP will go to senior centers, nursing homes, assisted living facilities or the persons home to help individuals learn about AT for greater independence. Aids for daily living is an AT area of particular interest to this group. NCATP staff will show older adults items they can buy as well as items they can easily make for low cost.   NCATP staff will develop resource and informational materials to share with older adults educating them about devices which can make their everyday lives easier. Material will be available in large print. NCATP will continue to be an active planning member on on-going statewide initiatives such as the Rebalancing and Nursing Home Transition and Real Choice Grants which focus on community living transition. For example, a training module developed by NCATP is now used to train nurses aides and personal attendants on AT. Transition will continue to be addressed through the school, work, early intervention, and older adult tracks at the annual NC Assistive Technology Expo. Six sessions at the AT Expo in December 2005 dealt with transition issues.

8.2 <u>Public Awareness Activities</u> – Describe how the State will provide information to targeted individuals and entities relating to the availability, benefits, appropriateness, and costs of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(ii) of the AT Act.

The NC Assistive Technology Program will continue to conduct public-awareness activities on the availability, benefit, appropriateness and cost of assistive technology for the general public and targeted entities including JobLink Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, and public schools. NCATP will participate in activities such as fairs, exhibits, and presentations on an overview of assistive technology and the services offered by NCATP. AT Consultants and Specialists will participate in many local and regional community events and utilize those occasions as networking opportunities. A Fact Sheet about the services provided by NCATP and contact information for site locations will be updated regularly and will be available in large print and Spanish. NCATP Fact Sheets will be disseminated as part of public awareness activities. Material will be distributed by NCATP staff to public and private agencies at local, regional, and state planning meetings around social, health, education, work and transportation issues. Information about NCATP services will be tailored for targeted groups. Display board information will be modified with pictures and text appropriate to the AT needs of different age groups so that the targeted groups can better relate to the information. NCATP will continue to collaborate with entities such as early intervention agencies, schools, Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living offices and Centers for Independent Living and senior centers to provide public awareness activities such as early intervention conferences and meetings of parent; transition fairs for high school students, job fairs and recreation fairs, and senior center meetings.

NCATP will continue to operate a statewide system for Information and Referral. Individuals can contact NCATP state or regional offices by phone (voice/tty), email or on-site. Information is also available on the NCATP website at <u>www.ncatp.org</u> . Anyone can request NCATP services. They should contact the nearest NCATP center or office. NCATP staff will provide information on AT devices as well as information on funding resources and strategies. When an inquiry is received, NCATP staff will discuss the need and provide the information needed at that time if it is readily available. If research is needed, the response will be given in as timely a manner as is possible.   Some inquiries are short and simple and can be handled by phone or email. For example, someone asks where they can purchase a specific device or they may want to know where to get AT related services in their home area. How to get funding for purchase of a device is also a frequently asked question. Two NCATP staff will continue to specialize in funding resource information and will help people over the phone, via email and written correspondence know where to go for funding.   They will explain the eligibility requirements of funding programs and share strategies to help the individual get through the bureaucratic maze of state and federal agencies.   Additionally, inquiries will be received through the Careline, a statewide toll-free information and referral service through the NC Department of Health and Human Services. Individuals with AT needs will be referred from other public and private agencies such as the Department of Medical Assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living, Governor's

Advocacy Council for Person's with Disabilities, Department of Public Health, schools and hospitals, Easter Seals UCP North Carolina, and Partnerships in Assistive Technology. For questions about AT devices, the individual will be given additional information on websites of manufacturer / vendor contact information. Contact information is gathered from the caller for follow-up satisfaction surveys.

8.3 <u>Coordination and Collaboration</u> – Describe how the State will coordinate activities among public and private entities that are responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services to individuals with disabilities, service providers, and others to improve access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(iii) of the AT Act.

The NC Assistive Technology Program will continue to work with agencies to increase the provision of AT devices and services. Coordination & Collaboration involves "having a seat at the table" so that AT issues are included in planning and policy development. Staff will be involved regionally in interagency work groups related to the schools, early intervention and older adults. NCATP will continue to be represented regularly at the state level at the Developmental Disability Consortium, Senior Driver Task Force, Assistive Technology Consortium, and Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs. Examples of NCATP's current efforts are: the inclusion of AT in the State Plan for the Division of Aging and Adult Services; expansion of augmentative communication services in the proposed comprehensive Medicaid waiver for people with mental retardation/developmental disabilities; planning and implementation of NC Health Choice so that AT needs are covered; development of a communication module for Certified Nursing Assistant training for the Office of Long Term Care; planning with the Real Choice Grants; collaboration with Sprint to provide Speech to Speech training; collaboration with the Division of Services to the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing to provide training on telephone use with devices for people with communication impairments*;* collaboration with Division of Public Health to staff the Assistive Technology Resource Centers in Sylva, Concord and Greensboro; and co-sponsorship of the annual statewide AT Expo with Partnerships in Assistive Technology (a 501(c)(3) organization), NC Department of Public Instruction, and NC Office on Disability and Health. NCATP will continue to work with agencies to expand access AT services in the state.

Attachment 9: Involvement of Public and Private Entities

9.1 <u>Nature and Extent of Resources</u> – Describe the nature and extent of resources that will be committed by public and private collaborators to assist in accomplishing identified goals.

NCATP will continue funding agreements with two private nonprofit physical rehabilitation centers: Whitaker Rehabilitation Center and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. These organizations will cover one-half the salary and fringe benefits for a full time AT Consultant at each site. They also will provide in-kind space for an AT Center.   NCATP will provide the other half of the salary and fringe benefits, equipment to upgrade the AT Centers, staff travel expenses and other administrative costs. The services provided through these agreements include device demonstration, device loan, technical assistance and training.

NCATP will continue a contract with the NC Division of Public Health, Women's and Children's Health Section to provide assistive technology services to young children (birth-5 years) with disabilities and their families in three regions of the state. The contract will provide each of the three regions $68,000 to assist in the costs of staffing, devices for short-term loan, device demonstration, technical assistance and training. In addition, the contract will help cover some of the costs of the Check-It-Out database which helps staff manage and track the device loan program and other services provided through the AT Centers.

In-kind space for most of the AT Centers, satellite locations and offices is provided by a variety of public and private organizations including: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (six sites), Independent Living Program (two sites), Children's Developmental Services Agency (seven sites), Nash Senior Center, Division of Services for the Blind Rehabilitation Center, Easter Seals UCP, Resource Centers for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (two sites), Whitaker Rehabilitation Center, Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center, Charlotte Institute of Rehabilitation, Sandhills Children's Center, Early Learning Cooperative, Moses Cone Rehab Center, Millis Center, Adaptables, and Whitaker Recreation Therapy Department.

9.2 <u>Mechanisms to Ensure Coordination</u> - Describe the mechanisms established to ensure coordination of activities and collaboration between the implementing entity, if any, and the State.

Not Applicable

9.3 <u>Involvement of State Advisory Council</u> - Describe the nature and extent of the involvement of the State Advisory Council in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals required in section 4(d)(3).

The NCATP State Advisory Council meets three times a year to provide input into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities of the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program.   The Council held three face-to-face meetings to learn about the new AT Act requirements and provide input into the implementation of the State AT Plan. Information was emailed out to council members in advance of the meetings. During the meetings, the council members discussed AT needs, strategies to help meet those needs, and the AT services NCATP will undertake. Council members who could not attend in person were asked to provide input via email or telephone.

Attachment 10: State Support

10.1 <u>State Support for State-level Activities</u> – If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State-level activities described in section 4(e)(2).

State funding will continue to help support the device demonstration and device loan services. This state funding is from the state legislature in the recurring budget to the NC Department of Health and Human Services. State funding will cover portions of seven (7) Assistive Technology Consultants and Specialists (5.1 full time equivalency) salaries and fringe benefits as well as travel expenses. These staff will conduct device demonstration and device loan services through the Assistive Technology Centers. State funding also will cover a portion of the equipment purchases each year to update and upgrade the devices used for demo and short term loan.

10.2 <u>State Support for State Leadership Activities</u> - If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State Leadership activities described in section 4(e)(3), if applicable.

State funding will continue to help support training, technical assistance, public awareness, coordination and collaboration activities provided by NCATP. This state funding is from the state legislature in the recurring budget to the NC Department of Health and Human Services. The seven (7) AT Consultants and Specialist described above in section 10.1 will also provide training, technical assistance, public awareness as well as coordination and collaboration services. In addition, State funds will cover 100% of the salaries and fringe benefits and travel expenses for the Funding Specialist (1 FTE), Consumer Resource Specialist (1 FTE), NCATP Director (1 FTE) and an Administrative Secretary (.75 FTE). The Funding Specialist, Consumer Resource Specialist and NCATP Director will provide training, technical assistance, public awareness, coordination and collaboration activities statewide. The part-time administrative secretary will provide support to the overall activities of NCATP.   State funding will also continue to help cover some of the other routine administrative costs such as office rent, office supplies, telephone, printing, postage, etc.

Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

11.1 <u>Tracking Expenditures</u> – Describe planned procedures for tracking expenditures for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

The federal AT Act funds will be maintained by the DVRS fiscal office in a distinct, separate budget account from any other funding administered under the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). The NCATP Director will review and track the expenditures in the budget (as outlined in section 11.2 below) through monthly detailed budget reports from the DVRS fiscal office. NCATP submits invoices to be paid by the federal grant to the fiscal office. DVRS makes the payment through the controller's office check writing process. The controller's office draws down federal funds based on the monthly expenditures.

11.2 <u>Proposed Budget Allocations</u> – Attach a budget containing proposed allocations for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

The following are proposed budget allocations for State Leadership and State Level Activities for Year 2 of the project.

Proposed Allocation	Distribution	Total Award Amount $ 422,909
State Level	75%	$ 317,182
State Leadership	25%	$ 105,727
Leadership Activities	*95% (of 25%)*	*$ 100,692*
Transition	*5% (of 25%)*	*$ 5,035*
Indirect Costs		$ 0
TOTAL		**$ 422,909**

Within the above budget, NCATP proposes to apportion funds for specific activities in the following manner.

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State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation
Device Reutilization Program	$ 27,720
Device Loan Program	$145,231
Device Demonstration Program	$144,231

State Leadership Activities	Proposed Allocation
Training and Technical Assistance Activities	$ 89,726
Transition	$ 5,035
Public Awareness Activities	$ 8,766
Coordination and Collaboration	$ 2,200

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